

Chuckie the Center

blows out both knees after  
two years, switches to academics.

Highlight reel: Microbiology's Meershim:  
"You'll get these unknowns if I must skip

dinner! Mrs M a Kraut too, but assembles ex-  
traordinary lasagna! Your own assembly too

sloppy, but if you ever acquire technique,  
you'll hear singing. Everything, deep down,

is art." Mrs Leonard in English hits the same note:  
"We call it Composition. Not smash-together!"

Memory of young math prof. Fuzzier. Taciturn save  
when filling a blackboard in a chortling frenzy.

And now the Athletic Department, which shunned  
when he went studious, elects him to its Hall of Fame.

He stares at the wall where Jilly has removed photos  
and banners and highschool awards. Cleaning.

But she leaves for the last time, taking  
her old cheerleader stuff. Lately, he tries

math apps on his tablet. He can answer  
many problems by a sort of rote, but

how others fall to surprising intuition!  
On the plane the Captain proves a woman.

Ends her staid routine with a wisecrack  
re wastrel brother to a sparse audience.

He sprawls in back and whispers, "Well,  
in my case, half a man better than none."